

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIE-00 NSCE-00  
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O R 072147Z MAR 78  
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5944  
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA  
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE  
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR  
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 1114

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: SHUM, NU, PINS  
SUBJECT: CORRECTION OF REPORT OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION AT MONIMBO

REFS: (A) MANAGUA 1092, (B) MANAGUA 0941

SUMMARY: AT LEAST ONE OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSE INCIDENTS AT MONIMBO REPORTED REF A NOW APPEARS A SIGNIFICANT DISTORTION OF ACTUAL EVENTS. THIS INSTANCE OF APPARENTLY DISTORTED INFORMATION ALSO POINTS OUT THE PROBLEM FOR THE EMBASSY IN TRYING TO INVESTIGATE RPORTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN A HIGHLY POLITICIZED ENVIRONMENT. END SUMMARY

1. THE REPORT IN REF A OF THE APPARENT MASSACRE OF SEVEN PERSONS BY THE GN IN A HOUSE NEAR THE HIGHWAY ON THE OUTSKIERTS OF MONIMBO APPEARS TO BE THE SAME INCIDENT REPORTED REF B (PARA 2C) IN WHICH THE GN CLAIMED TO HAVE REPELLED AN FSLN AMBUSH WHICH RESULTED IN THE DEATH OF ONE GN AND OF SEVEN MEMBERS OF THE FSLN. THE GON'S ACCOUNT OF THIS INCIDENT SUBSEQUENTLY HAS GAINED AT LEAST PARTIAL SUBSTANTIATION AS A RESULT OF AN FSLN COMMUNIQUE WHICH ACKNOWLEDGED THREE OF THE DEAD AS FSLN MEMBERS.

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2. THE SEVEN HAVE ALL BEEN IDENTIFIED BY THEIR FAMILIES AND THE GON CLAIMS ALL SEVEN WERE FSLN MEMBERS. ONE HAD A LONG HISTORY OF REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITY INCLUDING BEING ONE OF THE PRISONERS FREED BY THE FSLN AND TAKEN TO CUBA AS A RESULT OF THE DECEMBER 1974 KIDNAP-RANSOM ATTACK IN MANAGUA WHICH LED TO THE IMPOSITION OF MARTIAL LAW.

3. THE FSLN ACCOUNT OF THIS EVENT CLAIMS THAT IN THE SHOOTOUT AT

THE HOUSE THERE WERE TWO WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN WHO WERE TAKEN AWAY BY THE GN.

4. THE GN AND FSLN ACCOUNTS OF THE SHOOTOUT DIFFER FROM THAT GIVEN TO EMBOFFS ONLY IN THE DETAILS OF HOW MANY PERSONS WERE IN THE HOUSE AND THAT THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN MAY NOT HAVE BEEN KILLED IN THE SHOOT-

ING. THESE DETAILS MAKE A VERY GREAT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT APPEARED TO BE POSSIBLY A GN MASSACRE OF INNOCENT PEOPLE AND A GN RESPONSE TO AN FSLN ATTACK.

5. EMBOFF WAS FIRST LED BY FR. VASQUEX TO THE HOUSE ON MARCH 3 TO SEE THE SITE OF AN ATROCITY. WHEN EMBOFFS RETURNED TO MASAYA ON MARCH 4 NUMEROUS PEOPLE AT THE SCHOOL INSISTED THAT EMBOFFS VISIT A NEARBY HOUSE TO SEE WHERE SEVEN INNOCENT PERSONS HAD BEEN MASSACRED. FR. VASQUEZ AGAIN ACTED AS A GUIDE TO THE SAME HOUSE. FOLLOWING EMBOFFS WERE THREE CARLOADS OF JOURNALISTS INCLUDING PHOTOGRAPHERS FROM CANADIAN BROADCASTING COMPANY. IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT THE BULLET-RIDDLED HOUSE HAS BECOME A MONUMENT TO A GN ATROCITY WHICH IN FACT WAS NOT AN ATROCITY.

6. THE OTHER REPORT FROM A YOUNG MOTHER IN REF A OF HER HUSBAND HAVING BEEN KILLED WHEN HE WOULD NOT COME OUT OF A HOUSE WAS SUFFICIENTLY UNCLEAR THAT THE POSSIBILITY CANNOT BE RULED OUT THAT IT TOO REFERRED TO THE SAME INCIDENT.

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7. THE FACT THAT THE GN COMMANDERS IN MASAYA WHOM EMBOFF QUERIED ON THIS INCIDENT FAILED TO CLARIFY WHAT HAD OCCURRED, WAS DUE, GEN. FERNANDEZ SAID ON MAR 7, TO THE FACT THAT THEY HAD HEARD OF THE PILGRIMAGES TO THE HOUSE. FERNANDEZ PRODUCED THE OFFICERS WHO WERE IN CHARGE OF THE PATROL SAID TO HAVE BEEN AMBUSED AND THE TWO GROUPS OF GN REINFORCEMENTS. THEY RELATED THEIR VERSIONS SEPARATELY AND THEN RETURNED TO THE SCENE WHERE A WATCHMAN OF A NEARBY WATER STORAGE INSTALLATION WAS PRODUCED WHO CONFIRMED THEIR VERSION. DURING THESE DISCUSSIONS IT WAS LEARNED THAT: ALL WOMEN AND CHILDREN WERE LED OUT OF THE AREA SAFELY BEFORE THE HOUSE WAS ATTACKED; THAT THEY HAD BEEN TAKEN TO AN AREA WHERE THEY WOULD BE SAFE AND LATER TRANSPORTED INTO MASAYA BY THE RED CROSS; THAT THERE WERE THREE MEN KILLED IN THE HOUSE (ONE OF THEM BEING THE LONG-TIME GUERRILLA); THAT THE OTHER FOUR GUERRILLAS WERE KILLED AROUND THE SAME AREA APPARENTLY WHILE TRYING TO ESCAPE; THAT THERE HAD BEEN 25-30 GUERRILLAS IN TOTAL; THAT SIX WERE TAKEN PRISONERS AND THE OTHERS APPARENTLY ESCAPED.

8. COMMENT: IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER FR. VASQUEZ AND THE UDEL LEADERS WHO WERE DIRECTING OUTSIDE OBSERVERS TO THE HOUSE AND DESCRIBING IT AS A MASSACRE SITE WERE AWARE OF THE TRUE FACTS OR WERE SIMPLY THEMSELVES ACCEPTING A DISTORTED VERSION OF THE INCIDENT.

RUBENSTEIN

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## Message Attributes

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